LETTERS OF AN ARMY CHAPLAIN

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THE REV. WILLIAM DUNCAN GEARE
M.A. CANTAB.

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Dedicated

TO

HIS MOTHER

LETTERS OF AN ARMY CHAPLAIN

THIS little book makes no pretence to literary merit, but is written purely with the desire to do honour to a brave man, and to perpetuate his name and memory amongst his family and friends. The following extracts from letters written to the home circle speak for themselves, showing that the life of an Army Chaplain, whether serving at home or abroad in the field, is one of unceasing energy and responsibility and full of opportunities of serving the Heavenly King by service to others, even as in this case to making the Great Sacrifice—'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.'

WILLIAM DUNCAN GEARE was born on 28th November 1890, his father being a member of an old Exeter family, and his mother the daughter of a Scotchman who for forty-four years was vicar of a large parish in the north-west of London. He was the youngest of a family of four, and was taught

by his mother till nearly eight years of age, when he went to a preparatory school for boys in Hampstead. Later he was educated at Westminster School—his House being known as 'Home Boarders.' He was not brilliant at his books, but was always plodding and persevering and thoroughly conscientious in all that he undertook. Sport and physical exercises of all kinds appealed to him, so that he was a member of the gymnasium and school O.T.C., and joined in football and cricket, representing his House in the former; he was also very keen on lawn tennis and played a good hard game.

From earliest childhood he was of a very lovable and gentle disposition, and the seeds were then sown which during his short clerical life bore such good fruit. He had always expressed his desire and intention to enter the sacred ministry, and all along he kept that consistently in view. To this end, on leaving Westminster School, he proceeded to Queen's College, Cambridge, and graduated B.A. in June 1912. In order to live up to the old adage *mens sana in corpore sano* in which he was a firm believer, he went in for boating and coxed his college boat in his first two years, and rowed in his last year, when he won his oar in the Lent races.

During vacations he interested himself in

various Church organisations, such as the Keswick and Swanwick Conventions, and was an active worker in the Children's Seaside Service Mission, and also a Y.M.C.A. Hut for soldiers at Lulworth.

In October 1912 he went to Leeds Clergy School, and on St Thomas's Day, 21st December 1913, was ordained deacon at Ripon Cathedral, by Bishop Drury, with a title to St Margaret's Parish, Ilkley, as curate to the vicar, Rev. H. J. Glennie, M.A. He was ordained priest the following year, December 1914, and in January 1916 took his M.A. degree.

His work at Ilkley was very strenuous and varied. His vicar was an indefatigable worker who, besides having under his care a parish of about three thousand inhabitants, also had charge of a Mission in Bradford, which latter was worked by the curate.

When war was declared in 1914, he was very anxious to become an Army Chaplain, and offered his services to the Chaplain-General; but being told that already there was a waiting list of over one thousand chaplains, he sought some other means of working with our brave soldiers, and asked his Bishop for permission to join the ranks as a combatant. He felt it a reproach upon the younger clergy that they were not taking their

part in the active defence of their country, when so many men of their congregations of the same age were so readily offering themselves—however, his Bishop refused permission and he had to submit to the great disappointment. Early in 1916 there was a possibility of his obtaining a chaplaincy if he could find someone who could fill his place as curate at Ilkley—this he was able to arrange, his place being taken by an old college friend, and he received his commission as temporary chaplain, a copy of which is annexed.

GEORGE R.I.

TEMPORARY.

GEORGE, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and of the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India, etc., To Our Trusty and well beloved WILLIAM DUNCAN GEARE, Greeting: We reposing especial Trust and Confidence in your Loyalty, Piety, and Good Conduct, do, by these Presents, Constitute and Appoint you to be an Officer in the Army Chaplains' Department of our Army, from the First Day of May 1916, You are therefore carefully and diligently to discharge your Duty as such in the Rank of Chaplain to the Forces, 4th Class, or in such

L.S.

higher Rank as We may from time to time hereafter be pleased to promote or appoint you to, of which a notification will be made in the *London Gazette*, by doing and performing all and all manner of things thereunto belonging. And you are to observe and follow such Orders and Directions from time to time as you shall receive from Us, or any your superior Officer, according to the Rules and Discipline of War, in pursuance of the Trust hereby reposed in you.

GIVEN at Our Court at Saint James's, the Seventeenth day of May 1916, in the seventh year of Our Reign.

BY HIS MAJESTY'S COMMAND.

The Reverend WILLIAM DUNCAN GEARE,
Chaplain to the Forces, 4th Class,
Land Forces.

On the 1st May 1916, he took up his duties in the Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers' Depot at Ripon, a large camp of about thirty thousand men or more who had passed through the convalescent stage, and were training again for further service. It was quite uncertain how long these men would be at the camp, because as soon as they had become fit they would be drafted off to their depots, and consequently

they might be only a short time under the care of the chaplain, and it was therefore difficult to get into real touch with the men or to gain their close confidence. The fact also that the men were gathered together from various regiments and out of different branches of the service, and were not under the command of their own officers, militated against their having that feeling of *esprit de corps* which is so essential to military life and spirit, and prevented the chaplains gaining such influence as they would have done in their own regiment.

The following letters which he wrote home, mostly to his mother, relate some of his experiences whilst acting as chaplain at this depot camp, and the difficulties he met with in carrying out his duties :—

RIPON, *2nd May* 1916.

Now that I have got thoroughly settled down I can write to tell you something about my new life.

The Senior Chaplain, whom I know, wanted me to come early, and promised to meet my train and tell me what to do. So when I alighted at Ripon Station he was on the platform, and told me what my attachment was. I took a cab to the place he told me, reported to the Colonel, and went on to the Officers' quarters. On arriving there I had a very hearty

welcome, and was shown round the quarters till lunch—my own quarters was absolutely bare, of course, but the Senior Chaplain came round after lunch and took me into the town and helped me to get my camp kit—bed, chair, washstand, bits of carpet, etc. One of the officers got me an excellent servant, an R.C., who accepted the position so long as I did not try to convert him! He soon got my room nice (tolerably, of course!!), and other officers lent me things that I had not got, so that I could look forward to a comfortable night's rest, which I got. In the evening there was a Chaplains' Meeting for the Sunday's work.

I am very lucky in my piece of work. It does not sound very inviting by the address, but it will be an extremely interesting job, as it is something new. The men are fellows who have come back from the front wounded or sick, have had their time in hospital and convalescent homes, and are now starting training again. They only came here on Good Friday, and are at present in small numbers, 400, but drafts of 200 are likely to come up each week, so that my work will grow with my experience, which is ideal. Their work at present is only light, beginning at 7 and ending at 4.30. There are nine officers and myself, and they are the very best—three of them decorated since the war—full of fun of the best kind. I am sure I shall get every support from them. One of all these has already consented to join a choir I am raising for the Parade Service, and another very probably will too. They are so companionable,

and want me to go with them when they go into the town—I have been on the river with two of them this afternoon. Among the men I have not got much further than social chats in their Recreation Hut at present, but I have got one man for a Confirmation class I want to raise.

The men here have come over from Ireland before the revolt, and the officers are mostly Irishmen, who are, of course, immensely interested and know Dublin through and through.

Just below the Officers' lines is a Church of England Recreation Hut, where I shall hold Parade Services. There is a Devotional Room attached to it where I shall have two Celebrations, and the Parade Service will be in the big room, which, I think, will hold all the C. of E. men. But if there is a large influx this week, I must ask the Colonel to arrange for two services, at 10 and 11. Every day, of course, the Hut is used as a place for recreation, and I go in there periodically to see the men there. I think the right method is to introduce myself to them by showing myself and making myself attractive to them, so that they will not fear to approach me on any matter. Of course I rank as a captain, and that makes the men shy until I can dispel the shyness. The acknowledgment of salutes is a most wearisome job, as there is practically no one else that one meets but soldiers (30,000 of them), and when I walk with subalterns I still have the job to do for them, being senior officer. One very nice thing is that other officers salute me, even equals in rank, which, of course, they are not obliged to do. With all

this etiquette one has to fight against stiffness and formality. In acknowledging, I generally give a smile and a 'good morning.'

As our men have so recently come in the Officers' mess is absolutely bare, and we are all going to club together and get it furnished with carpet and easy chairs and pictures, etc. It will mean a pretty penny.

I shall not apply for leave yet awhile, as I am too keen on working my job up. It is lovely to be doing work one is thunderingly keen on.

RIPON, 10*th May* 1916.

From to-day for an indefinite period of some weeks the whole camp of 40,000 men is in quarantine, owing to an epidemic which rumour says is smallpox. No one is allowed out of the camp, no canteens or institutes may open, and all the men have to mess in their own huts where they sleep, and no one may go into the lines of any other regiment, so we are in for a dull time.

The men to whom I am attached are from the different companies of the R.E. and R.A., and when passed out from here they go to their own depots here in England and rejoin their own lot at the front. That means that I shall not be with any of these men at the front. But this is the lot of all of our chaplains here, for the camp is composed of third-line men, that is to say men who go out to 'feed' the first and second-line men at the front, and so go out in drafts and not in units. Consequently our

chaplains go out independently, and are put to men whom they have not seen before, which is a pity. Since I have been here the Senior Chaplain has gone to the front, and the new Senior is a home-service man, so that there is only one man to go out before me, but, of course, I shall not be going for some months yet. I come third on the list out of five chaplains.

We are all in huts here. You have no idea what this camp looks like. It is a small town, of course, to hold 40,000 men, *i.e.* North and South Camps, and extends for miles. It lies from about half a mile out of Ripon to as far as Studley Royal, and about the same in breadth. Studley Royal is the park where Fountains Abbey lies.

I have received many letters from parishioners in Ilkley, and some offers of anything I like to ask for for the men, or for furnishing my private room in the C. of E. Institute as a chapel. It is a Hut which was raised by the Dioceses of Ripon and Wakefield, and I have got the A.D.A.C.G. to write up to the Diocese for £20 to fit it up. If I am successful in getting the money, I shall be able to let my Ilkley friends know what I want. Last Sunday I draped a table to look like an altar, and used my own little brass cross and lights given me by someone in Ilkley, and for linen I used afternoon tea-cloths and pocket-handkerchiefs, and borrowed vessels from the Dean of Ripon. I have now written up to the War Office for a set of vessels and linen with which I ought to be provided.

RIPON, 10*th May* 1916.

Last Friday I visited No. 4 Y.M.C.A. Hut where some of our Ilkley people are helping, and they told me that some of the Episcopalians in the Scotch troops where they work had been asking for Communion for a long time, and that no padre had been able to give it them. Apparently their parades would not allow them time to get to the 7 o'clock Celebrations anywhere, so I got hold of one of the men and told him to let as many men know as possible that I would come to the Y.M.C.A. and celebrate there at 5.45 on the Sunday, and then get back to my own Celebration at 7. So on Sunday I got up at 4.45 and walked a mile with my bag to the Y.M.C.A. One of the Scotchies served for me —they made a temporary altar on the stage, and I had as my congregation Scotchies and part of the Ilkley congregation! At the Chaplains' Meeting next day I told the Senior what I had done and asked permission to continue this, which was readily granted. So I shall have a periodical Celebration there—the worst of it is that it has to be so fearfully early. The Celebrations at my hut were very poorly attended (alas! this is the usual thing). I held them at 7 and 11.30, and just as I had finished the 11.30 two men came in, having thought it was to be at 12, and so I had another one for them. I don't like celebrating four times in one day. The Church Parade at 10 went quite well despite my pianist, who had a fit of nerves and played so atrociously that when the hymns got

started I shut him up. One of the officers is going to play next time. I am afraid a choir will not be possible, the men do not volunteer in large enough numbers—if they were Yorkshiremen they would all want to be in. The men sang very lustily, and they were perfectly quiet during the prayers, and listened to the address very attentively—of course I have to preach without a note of any kind, which I should never dare to do before the St Margaret's congregation; but I have had practice at that in the Sanatorium and Red Cross Hospital at Ilkley. I have come across two men who were in our Hospital, one in quite another part of the camp, and another in the Artillery here; it is rather extraordinary, isn't it? My Confirmation class has grown to 13 and includes two Presbyterians (Scotch). I want to start now, but the quarantine in which we are now robs me of my quiet room, and there is no place to hold it. The disease in the camp now is said to be diphtheria—more or less officially—not smallpox as rumour had it. The poor men are grumbling at the confinement, and I am not surprised—it is very dull not being allowed beyond their own lines. Many of them have got no baccy or writing-paper, and there is no means of getting them, as all canteens are shut. We have no cases yet, and as we are on the edge of the camp I do not think we shall get any. Church Parades have to be in the open air next Sunday.

RIPON, 16*th May* 1916.

My report to the Senior Chaplain about the Celebration that I took for the Scotch troops has resulted in the discovery that the Episcopalians in the North Camp have been overlooked all this time, and that no C. of E. padre has been appointed to look after them. They go to the Cathedral for Parade Service with other troops, but otherwise, they have been spiritually starved. The new Senior Chaplain was quick to act, and has made a thorough tour of the whole of Ripon Camp and seen that no part of it was left uncovered, and has given to me the charge of all Episcopalians in the Scotch troops of the North Camp. It sounds formidable, but it is not really, as they amount only to about 200 men out of 9000 Scotchies, but of course the difficulty is in finding them out—it is like looking for needles in a haystack, but I have managed to get one or two names and hope to get others from them, and to celebrate with more or less regularity for them, but as things are at present the Celebration has to be so fearfully early.

Last Sunday, owing to the quarantine, Parade Services had to be in the open air, and, alas! it was wet. The R.A. and R.E., of course, share the same service. The R.A. arrived at the place first, and as it was simply pelting, and many of the men had rheumatism, the C.O. asked if he should dismiss them, and I said I thought he had better, so they were dismissed. Then later the Engineers came on, and the rain

began to stop, and so we had the service for them, but I asked permission to shorten the service by leaving out the address, for one reason that it was still wet, and for another, that the lateness of their coming on the scene would make me very late for another parade I had for the Scotchies, and so we just had hymns and the service. One of the officers played the harmonium in great style—including a voluntary! After that I ran off with my servant who carried my bag to the Scotch lines, and as the rain stopped we had the full service and address. We had no instrument to accompany us there, and I had to start the hymns with a bellow myself! Fortunately I hit on a good note each time, and they worked out well within the men's compass. But if there is a job I loathe it is starting hymns!

In the evening, as no service was allowed to be held in the Institute owing to the isolation, I took one of the officers with me and went to Studley Church for Evensong, and, do you know, the church was simply packed with soldiers standing and sitting in every inch of it, and a crowd outside of them in the porch. It was a most inspiring sight, and seems to show that the soldier *is* religious. If a Staff Officer had been there, I wonder what he would have thought of the keeping of the quarantine rule? There is nothing to say they may not go to a church not in the town, but it is absurd that men can go in such crowds to a church, and yet we cannot hold a Celebration at our institutes and camp churches for a dozen men or so.

I received £1 from —— this week. It has purchased 100 packets of Woodbines—the cheapest cigarettes on the market and consequently the one the soldier chiefly buys; and also 400 copies of a pamphlet on Holy Communion, which I hope will bring more men to Communion. For I find with all chaplains everywhere, that the Tommy is slow to realise the value of Communion.

RIPON, *23rd May* 1916.

I think I told you that I have been given the charge of the Episcopalians among the Scotch troops (8 battalions) in the North Camp. I have been busy looking out for an empty hut for a little camp church, and have now succeeded in getting one right in the centre of my parish there, so that they will find it possible to come to Communion there on Sunday mornings instead of the Y.M.C.A. Recreation Hut, where the authorities will not allow Celebration more frequently than once a month. After being granted permission to use the hut as my own, I saw the Colonel in whose lines it stands and asked him to allow me an orderly, and a man is to be detailed once a week to keep it clean. I have now got to claim benches and chairs, and cleaning materials and a table. I wonder when it will begin to look like a church! I have the job now of furnishing two churches. For the room that I use at the Depot here I have a fund to draw upon, but for this new one I shall have

to raise money myself. I wonder if you could mention it to friends. I shall advertise in the *Church Times*, I think, and see what that will do, but it will need a good amount of money to make it decent, from nothing but a bareboarded hut. It makes it very interesting work—all this pioneering. I am building on my own foundations, which makes one doubly keen.

What a life this is! In an over-worked parish the Master's work can become almost a drudgery—it seems dreadful to say so. Now it is all a tremendous pleasure because it is not overdone. I feel here, sometimes, that I ought to do much more than I am doing, but when the men are out of camp during the day there is only the evening that one can use. Of course, there are addresses to think out, and classes to plan, and things of business to be done, but either they are so light or else my heart is so joyful that they seem easy matters.

RIPON, *24th May* 1916.

It has been glorious here, especially just now when a thunder shower the day before yesterday has cleared the stuffiness out of the air, and the country looks beautiful. It is surprising how, in spite of the vastness of the camp and the change that it has made in what were open fields, there is a great picturesqueness all round. Trees and hedges still remain which hide what would otherwise be a landscape of roofs of huts,

and the men take a delight in making gardens of flowers and stonework in front of their huts. The air, too, is full of the drums and skirl of bagpipes, which makes everything more idyllic were it not that one remembers that behind them there march men who are going to face the most horrible and unnatural of all adventures.

I have had two goes on a horse—the Colonel's—the other officers said they would give me lessons. The first time I got on there was not much 'lesson' about it, for as soon as I got on the horse simply galloped all over the place. We were in a large field, and the brute dashed from one end to the other, while the men stood in the middle of the field and gasped at my sticking on! I wanted him to trot, but he would only walk or gallop, and as I preferred the latter to the former we covered a good deal of ground in a short time. They told me beforehand that he had a mouth and was full of beans, but I never expected he would be so hard to pull up. The miracle was that he stopped at the hedges and did not clear them. Twice I thought he was going to leap, once at a hedge and once down a steep fall in the ground, but both times he stopped dead, and I could just save myself from going over his head! After a quarter of an hour the horse was soaked in perspiration, and so was I! The other fellows said that they had never seen any one so plucky the first time he had sat astride a horse, and that a 'gingery' one, but all I could do was to turn him and stick on,

pulling up was beyond my powers for a long time!! The other time I was on I did manage to get him to trot, as someone else had been on him before and had taken some of the energy out of the horse—but if you ask me, in my present state as a novice, a gallop is the more comfortable!!

RIPON, 31*st May* 1916.

We have had a Chaplains' Meeting, after which I have been having a long talk with a new chaplain who is to work among the Scotch in the South Camp. Two other new chaplains are coming this week, so that we shall be more or less adequately staffed. This will enable me to concentrate my work entirely on the Depot, as one of the new men is to be appointed to take on the Scotch troops in the North Camp, so that he will have the furnishing of the Camp church to do, and the difficult job of searching out the Episcopalians. In one way I am sorry to give it up, as the money you have all given had a personal as well as a charitable element about it, and I was looking forward to furnishing the church to my taste; but now, I suppose, I must hand over the money for him to use, and also various hangings and carpets which —— is sending up. But, on the other hand, it is nice to think that the work there will be properly done. and I am pleased that I was the first to call attention to the needs there.

RIPON, *22nd June* 1916.

Last night one of my Confirmation candidates, a Scotchy, came and told me that he was ordered to the front in a draft to-morrow (Friday). Very well, I said, you must be confirmed straight away. As it happened I had given him my last instruction, and was going to just run through the service and get him confirmed next week. So this morning I biked off to the Palace, caught the Bishop with crowds of rural deans at breakfast—and asked him to confirm the boy this afternoon. Fortunately, the Bishop was free to do so, and so off I biked again to the boy, and he is coming round at 2 this afternoon to have a chat about it and a final polish up, and then we go to the Palace where he will be confirmed at the chapel—and then to the Front to-morrow!! Doesn't it make Confirmation a very real thing? He is a great fellow with a large soul and an affectionate nature, and he realises the imperative need of going out with all the spiritual force that God is capable of endowing him with.

My other boys are coming on, and soon I shall be taking another batch to the Bishop. I do rejoice over these first-fruits.

My work among the Scotch is now at an end. A man named —— has been appointed to work entirely among them. It is a load off my shoulders and off my conscience too, for I could devote only a very little time among them. I have been teaching him how to go about things, and think he will turn out well. You

know, I am acting Senior Chaplain this week—doesn't it sound grand? The Senior is down with the 'flue,' and the next is away being married, or, rather, honeymooning. I am third out of eight!

RIPON, *27th June* 1916.

Our mess has become very aristocratic all at once by the addition of Lieut.-Col. ——, an M.P. He is quartered in the same block as myself, *i.e.* the artillery officers. We are a very lively party, and plenty of row goes on among ourselves till midnight, so we shall have to sober down. We have been thinking out grievances for him to lay before the House!

I got up a concert the other evening with fear and trepidation that men might not rally to it. They have a way of not pulling together just now. But my fears were all set at rest. The Institute (which is a big place as you see from the photo) was simply packed, and men were standing all round the doors. The talent was varied, of course; the real artist was the accompanist, who made up accompaniments to songs for which he was unprovided with music, and which he had never heard of before! In the afternoon I took a boy to be confirmed. The Bishop confirmed him in the Palace chapel, and spoke some very nice words. I have now another who is ready, but I am waiting to finish off one or two others before presenting him, in order to save the Bishop. I know this boy is not being sent off yet. One thing which I do

like now is this—the men are coming up to me more. Really, I ought to be a Solomon to unravel the tangled skeins they bring to me, chiefly, I am afraid, matrimonial tangles! Anyway it shows that they are not afraid of me, and it gives me the key very often to get in possession of their souls.

RIPON, *2nd July* 1916.

I have just finished a very happy morning. We had our Church Parade in one of our large dining halls, which made a much nicer place of worship than the open air, with a gusty wind and only a harmonium for a band. To-day we could have the full effect of 500 men's voices singing 'Onward Christian Soldiers,' 'Rock of Ages,' and 'O Jesus, I have promised to serve Thee to the End,' as well as the chants for the psalms. I stood on a table and gave them an address on Holy Communion, to try to get them to come along better. The result came sooner and better than I had expected, for at the 11.45 Celebration we more than doubled the number of communicants that I have ever had before. I would have preferred them to have come at the early Celebration the next Sunday, but one is immensely thankful for their presence at *any* Celebration. The Gospel for to-day—the man who made a great supper and bade many, and they all began to make excuse—was easy to compare with the Son of Man who made a greater Supper, and bids many who make excuses for staying away. It is encouraging

to feel that my addresses to the men find hearts.

I have had two riding lessons in the week, for I have been given permission by the Colonel of the Artillery Training School to join their riding classes, and have been out with regular instructors. Great sport, but unfortunately I was provided with Tommy's saddles, consequently—!! The first instructor amused me by saying to me as we cantered side by side, 'Now, just imagine you are in an arm-chair.' 'Oh yes,' I said, 'but under the circumstances it needs rather a big stretch of imagination!' The second time they gave me another horse—they never allow one the same horse again, to accustom one to ride *any* horse. And the brute I was given was very restive and stubborn—especially as he knew I had no spurs. He did his best to throw me first of all, and then refused to budge from the horse lines and had to be dragged away by my mentor. It was not half so much fun on him, and all I did was wrist work on the reins and compelling the horse to do what I wanted him to do, *e.g.* making him stand still, turn, and back, or break from walk to trot, or trot to canter—very difficult things to do without spurs or crop.

Last Thursday I took one of my boys to the Bishop of Knaresborough at the Cathedral to be baptized and confirmed. He was included in a draft to go out the next day, but at the eleventh hour it was discovered that he was not fit, so now I shall be able to prepare him for Communion.

To-morrow afternoon I am going to be inoculated, so I shall have to be quiet until 48 hours are up. It is much better to get such things done now than to crowd them into the last leave before going out.

Next Sunday the Chaplain-General visits Ripon. I hope to get him to address our men at Church Parade, but his time is very full. On the Monday he will hold a conference of chaplains at the Palace, and we shall discuss various things about our work and how we are going to fit in the National Mission.

RIPON, *13th July* 1916.

The Chaplain-General came up last Sunday and met the chaplains of the Northern Command at a conference at the Palace on Monday. In the evening I and five of our chaplains with 120 or 130 of the Diocesan Clergy went into retreat at the Training College for Teachers here until yesterday morning. It was conducted by the Bishop of Chelmsford (Watts-Ditchfield), who gave us plenty to think about and to stir us up. He spoke at all the addresses of some different ideals of a parson's life which we have lost. Of course it was the life and work of the parochial clergy he spoke on, but I could easily translate it all to make it fit my circumstances.

Things are going on in connection with the National Mission. We are trying our best in the camp. Of course the Mission at present has not got beyond the faithful laity; when they

are prepared, the next stage is the lost sheep. We have started meetings every Thursday evening for the Tommies in the town. The first was last Thursday, and I took down the keenest of my men. They were struck, and were filled with the spirit one wants—'What are we going to do in the Depot about it?' I told them all to meet me on the Saturday, and we discussed our plans. First of all, I made it almost a rule that each man should come every week and be responsible for bringing at least one extra each time, and the men they bring should likewise be responsible for bringing a man apiece for the time after, and so I hope the movement will grow. Then I made it quite plain that I expected each man to bear fearless witness to Christ by saying his prayers openly in his hut, and by speaking to weak brothers. Then I arranged for a quarter of an hour's prayer together a week—and two Bible Classes, one on Sundays and the other in the week, the first of which I shall be responsible for all through, and the other I shall start, and the different men will get up different subjects, and talk on them and we will all discuss. We shall be guided by God and circumstances as to what else can be done. This on the top of two addresses and a string of Confirmation classes will make me busy.

The chaplain above me expects to go to the Front in a fortnight's time. That will probably make me the next to go from Ripon, and it is possible that I may not see my six months

out, though I do not expect it any time yet.

I shall soon have to have my second inoculation. I have just got over the effects of the first (ten days ago). It did not affect me at all in myself, but my arm was very sore and achey for three days. It felt at first as if I had been banging my funny bone incessantly for a day, and then as if I had had awful cramp in the muscles. I don't think it affects an abstainer like me often, but others it quite bowls over for a couple of days sometimes, and they have to keep to bed.

RIPON, 23*rd July* 1916.

My work has been most encouraging. Tuesday, I started my first Bible Circle in connection with the National Mission, and it went very well indeed. I have given the men questions to get up by next time, and jolly hard questions too, and they are very keen on doing them and answering them by next Tuesday. Wednesday, I baptized one of my men and received another into the Church. Thursday, I took two to the Bishop for Confirmation, leaving Saturday for sermons—and all through the week I have of course been putting in Confirmation classes. What does please me is that all along one knows and sees that everything is telling. We always have said that we must not look for results. But, do you know, I think we ought to much more than we do. In the old Apostolic days they used to count

up the numbers of people 'added unto the Church,' and now we just hope we have made an impression and leave it. Here, certainly, one must work on until one definitely does get results, and they do come. I have got a fellow converted from a rotter—baptized, confirmed—and he made his first Communion this morning—not my doing of course, but the grace of God in me and him—and there is hardly a meeting for prayer or Bible Study that that lad is absent from. That is the encouraging thing. And then there is the Holy Communion, to which at first two men or so used to come, and this morning we had fifteen at one of the Celebrations (not that even that is anything like what it ought to be, but it is decidedly good compared with most units). I am afraid this sounds as if I was blowing my own trumpet—I am not. To God be the glory. He may be using me—He *is* using me—but all the compelling force is from Him, going into the hearts of those men. But what a number there is still to touch. I have got hold of but a small circle, but an *enthusiastic* minority which might work wonders.

RIPON, *6th August* 1916.

It has been a very busy week. For one thing we have been 'flitting,' as they say in Yorkshire. I think I told you we had orders to move into the South Camp. Those orders were cancelled, and instead we had to give up two of our camps and squash ourselves into

two of the camps we were occupying instead of the four. I was delighted because now I can keep on my church, which is so much admired, instead of having to start again. But the officers have moved their quarters, which has upset us of course. They are not far from the old ones and are in a nicer position, so we have scored in that way. The address remains the same.

In addition to this, I have been busy with the finishing touches to the church. A prayer-desk and the hangings have come. All the latter are not up yet, but what is up makes a vast difference to the look of the place.

Friday, of course, was the War Anniversary. The Senior Chaplain asked me to take two of the services in the evening in the camp, while he took the other two. Why we did not divide the services up properly among the chaplains, I do not know. The first one was rather a failure, as the bills we had had printed had not been posted at the Hall, and no one knew that a service was going to take place until I arrived and broke the news. I suppose we had a congregation of 35. The second one was up in the Institute I look after, and was a great success. The numbers must have been 100, and everyone liked the service.

I have accepted the position of Mess-Secretary here. Being the most likely of them to be staying longest, I thought it was up to me to do so. But it is no sinecure. What makes it worse is that to-day, the eve of my taking over, the cash box containing £5 odd

and several cheques has been stolen from the late secretary's room. There has been a great deal of thieving here from officers' rooms. All that I have lost is a bicycle pump. It is an awful nuisance the mess money being stolen, and it will fall to me to try to recover it.

RIPON, 14*th August* 1916.

I am glad the National Mission is giving an impetus to the study of the Bible. I think that the Old and New Testaments never had such a message as they have to us now, and each in their different ways ought to bring us to penitence. The O.T. prophets tried to bring people to it by fear lest their country should be smashed up, and we in England need such a frightening in these days. Fear for our country ought to lead us to repentance. And the N.T. leads to repentance in another way, by showing us the Person and Goodness of Christ —and if we put our lives side by side with His, and think that we are supposed to be like Him, it would not be long before we should repent of our poor imitation. 'The Goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.' The same message, but each Testament has a different method of inducement.

To study Amos I recommend the Expositor's Bible Series, one of the volumes of *The Twelve Prophets*, whichever contains Amos, by G. A. Smith, I think. For the Epistle to the Ephesians read Gore's book, *The Epistle to the Ephesians.*

I am busy drawing up rules for the Mess here, and am wondering how they will be received. Of course they have to be signed by the Colonel first before they are published. Many of them are pretty strict, and are meant to put a stop to orgies which periodically, or rather, persistently occur in the late evenings. The Major is with me and the best of the officers. I am glad that my being Mess Secretary enables me to make a firm stand, and to have some backing behind me. I do not anticipate trouble as I am well respected, and, I think, liked. I have instituted a Suggestion Book which flourishes, and in which the Mess Sec. can make sarcastic or polite answers according to the nature of the suggestion!

Oh, it is a great life this. Almost the 'Varsity over again with the big difference that I have a mission and big position in it.

RIPON, *23rd August* 1916.

On reaching the Depot at 5.30 P.M. (after a visit to Ilkley), I found an express letter waiting for me from the Deputy Assistant Chaplain-General to say that he was unable to conduct the National Mission Bible Circle which he always takes on Thursday evening for the troops; and he asked me to take it instead, at the same time he told the Senior Chaplain that I would do so. I ran off to the Senior to tell him I had not enough time to prepare for it. Unfortunately he was out, and so I had to grind

away and prepare in one and a half hours for a threequarter-hour talk. All thoughts of dinner had to go. But I managed it, and we had a very jolly and successful meeting.

On Sunday afternoon I did something I never have done here before, viz. Hospital services. Quite strenuous work, including five different addresses in two hours.

RIPON, *3rd September* 1916.

This has been an awful day. Rain has been pouring down, incessantly almost, in torrents, with thunder and lightning. The camp is a mire with large ponds. For the first time since I have been here I had to cancel Church Parade, but the disappointment has been made up by one of the most wonderful services of my life this evening. I always have a voluntary informal service every Sunday evening, generally disappointing so far as numbers are concerned, in the Institute. To-night, in spite of the rain, the whole Institute was packed from end to end, and there were not enough chairs to seat them all. I felt perfectly inspired for my address, and you can imagine how the hymns went. After service a fellow got on the platform and played more hymn tunes, and when I left them at 9 o'clock they were still at it, singing hymns and eating buns and drinking coffee. I *am* so pleased, because one of the chaplains has started the rumour that there was not the spiritual atmosphere in our C. of E. Institutes that there is in the Y.M.C.A.'s, and I have never

been inclined to agree. Now I shall instance this at the Chaplains' Meeting to-morrow.

RIPON, *12th September* 1916.

Last Sunday I preached at the Cathedral for the first time. The Depot Parades are always held in their own lines, and only certain units can get to the Cathedral. The Senior Chaplain arranged for another to take my parade, and I had the Scottish troops to harangue. It was partly spoilt by the fact that the R.A.M.C., who provide the band, did not turn up owing to a little rain, and so one of the Yorks had to play the organ. I must say that I much preferred, under the circumstances, my own parades which are less formal and more hearty.

RIPON, *18th September* 1916.

The Deputy Assistant Chaplain-General sent for me and the next Senior Chaplain this morning, to say that he had a request this morning for two chaplains from Ripon to go to the Front, as the need was urgent. He said we were the most suitable men to go, and asked if he could send our names to the War Office. Of course we were all over the idea. So we expect a War Office letter in a day or so to tell us to pack up our things, take 6 days' Expeditionary leave, and then cross.

In any case I cannot leave here to come home till Friday, as I have some boys to be confirmed

then, but if I get my War Office orders I shall probably be home on Friday night.

At present I cannot give you any more definite news, as I must await my orders from the W.O.; but as they told the D.A.C.G. that the need was urgent, and wanted to be supplied immediately, I *expect* to be home before Sunday.

On Friday, 22nd September 1916, he left Ripon and came to London to get his kit for foreign service and make arrangements for his journey, and on 26th September received orders from the War Office to depart for France the next morning.

On 27th September he left Charing Cross at 8.30 A.M. with another chaplain and also a college friend, and after a smooth crossing, escorted by a destroyer, arrived at Boulogne at 1 P.M. They had lunch at the Officers' Club, and took a walk along the cliffs, and after tea and dinner they left for St Omer and arrived at 11.30 P.M., and stayed the night at the Y.M.C.A. Officers' Rest Hut.

From this date the following letters will best tell his life and experiences amongst the soldiers :—

FRANCE, *27th September* 1916.

Here I am after an excellent crossing. I met an old Queen's friend, G——, and we have stuck together. You will not take this as my

address, of course; we are using it as our home until we move on at 7 P.M. to-night. This means a wait here of 6½ hours. We have had a meal here on arrival, and have strolled round the town, and are now meditating a bathe if we have time, and can find the way to the '*plage*.' G —— has left all the French to me—the rotter—but I have so far got on jolly well. My first burst nearly knocked him over! Really, we have had a most amusing time so far, especially with our baggage. The porters are so comical, and *will* squabble with each other. The disputes so far have ended in three or four men sharing the luggage *and the tips!*

We hope to get to our next destination before the hotels close to-night.

FRANCE, *28th September* 1916.

I am at the place where I was to get my orders. We arrived here last night at 11.45 P.M., and, after leaving our baggage at the station (necessarily, as there were no porters), were conducted by another chaplain, who is posted to this town and whom we met on the way, to this Y.M.C.A.

This morning we reported and got our orders. G —— and I are both going 'up the line' though not to the same place. Anyhow, we shall travel part way together, and then, alas! we shall separate. I am delighted to get what I wanted without putting in time at the Base. As far as I know a lot will be going on where

I am sent. We start to-morrow at 9.30 in the morning.

This is a nice town with a cathedral, which I hope to visit, and a church (St Bertie) ruined at the Revolution I am told.

B.E.F., FRANCE, 29*th September* 1916.

I have written my address to which letters should be sent, but I am nowhere near there yet. It is simply awful all this travelling. I had to go to a place to report and stayed a day and two nights there, and after being told my job I have had to come right back here, which is the nearest sea-port town to England, opposite Dover; so that since I have been in France, I have never been so near to home as I am at this moment. The object, of course, is to get on to the railway line for my destination. I start again at 7 to-night and get to another place somewhere in the middle of the night. I expect I shall have to sleep in the station or a siding, and I hope to get to my destination either on Saturday night or else on Sunday. I hope the latter, as I should like to find my feet before doing Sunday duty.

The French trains, of course, are appalling, and travel about as fast as a cow. The reason why I have been delayed so much is partly to be accounted for by a breakdown on the most direct line. I can tell you I shall not be sorry when 'travelling days are done,' though the time passes pleasantly enough in between the train journeys—this afternoon, for instance, we have been to a good picture show.

The towns I have been in so far have been full of British Tommies.

B.E.F., FRANCE, 4*th October* 1916.

Plenty has happened to me since I last wrote home, though it has all been in the nature of travelling on wretched troop trains, which nearly always run 4 hours or so behind time. Rest has come sweetly to me here last night, as the last few nights have been spent in trains, through the fact that I have been chasing my Division. Eventually I found them, on the way from the place where they had been for some time, travelling to a quieter district, though it is not as quiet as it might be, or as quiet a place as the Division deserves to be placed in after what they have gone through. So here I am at last with my Brigade, and the worry and bustle of travelling are over.

I have seen the Senior Chaplain of the Division. He seems a very nice man, and is very much annoyed that the Chaplains' Department did not know of the move and did not direct me accordingly. It has been very worrying for me, and has cost me my Burberry, and also very nearly my valise and suit case which were lost for some days. I think I shall be able to get a trench coat or Burberry out here, but meanwhile I get soaked through every day, as my coat does not cover my knees! *C'est la guerre.*

At present we are on our way to the part of the line we are taking over, and expect to be

in the trenches to-night. I have got a very nice C.O., and he will allow me, and would like me, to be in the trenches with the men as much as I can. He has a very strong impression of the value of the chaplain's work.

I am feeling very green and fresh. The work here will be so different from the work at Ripon, though I am most thankful to have had the experience I gained there. There can be no such thing as routine here, and so I am afraid there will be a constant worry of arranging things, *e.g.* when and where services can be held. It is impossible to write interesting letters when one is allowed to say so little. Perhaps later on I may be able to get more into the way of it.

I have not received any letters yet. I expect it is because of the move. Perhaps they will all come together when we have settled down, or perhaps they will all have been lost.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *7th October* 1916.

At last I have got a bundle of letters. It was lovely having such a lovely crowd of letters to read, for home seems now so far away—not that I am exactly home-sick, but it is a different world in which I am living now, a world that is so awful and barbarous and so out of touch with the refinement of home life.

I have two battalions of the King's under my care—the 7th and the 9th—or rather what is left of them after the heavy fighting they have had on another part of the line. Where we now

are it is quiet (as the term 'quietness' is understood here).

One's feelings in being moved up are rather weird for one who is in for his first taste of the thing. A train travelling absolutely noiselessly at a very slow speed in total darkness, a disentraining on the rails in the night as black as ink, lit up brilliantly every minute or so by 'fairy lights' in the trenches, with the noise of rival guns banging away at each other, and a slow tramp into a town which contains nothing but absolute ruins! We stumbled over bricks and holes to billets—the cellars of these ruined houses. My own, with the rest of the Battalion Headquarters Staff, was the cellars of a convent. It needed the morning light to see what kind of place it was—a most fine building it must have been, with two big courtyards. A tour round the town made one absolutely sick. Beautiful and costly buildings done to atoms, cathedral and all, and not a single house anywhere standing whole! However, our cellars were comfortable, and I had some great sleeps that first night and during the next day, for I had much to make up; and then the next evening the battalion I am attached to moved up to the trenches and I with them. At the back of the trenches is the Battalion Headquarters. There I sleep and feed, and during the day I go round and into the firing line to see the men. The Bosche is not putting heavy stuff into the trenches; he directs his shells only against our batteries or into the town, the latter only occasionally, so there is no danger in

the firing line if one remembers spots where the sandbags are not high enough. It is there that casualties occur, for the Bosche has rifles fixed for those places. He snipes our Headquarters at random during the evening occasionally, on the off-chance of catching one of us outside.

To-day I have spent my time back in the town with my other battalion. It is a beastly nuisance that one is in the trenches while the other is in reserve, because it means running backwards and forwards. I have been arranging services for to-morrow for that battalion. Holy Communion, 7.30 and 11.30. Morning service at 11 and evening service at 5 in a church which still possesses a steeple and part of a roof and a fair amount of wall. It must have been a fine church before it was so knocked about. I am not allowed to hold a Parade Service. It all has to be voluntary, because a large body of men are not allowed to congregate in the town in case Fritz sends over some stuff into the middle of them. I wish I could hold a service for some of the men in the trenches, but I am afraid it will always be impossible. Anyhow I hope to get round to see them to-morrow night after my services here, and remind them that it is the Lord's Day. I am spending to-night in the town to be ready for to-morrow. What a strange Sunday it will be, but not so strange as last Sunday, which I spent in railway trains.

It is the fashion here to have cakes sent out from home for the tea-table. I ought to do as others do, so do you mind sending out one to

me? It sounds very greedy, but I should not feel so greedy in asking for it as in continually eating other officers' without contributing!

I have just had dinner—roast beef cooked in a petrol tin! How resourceful Tommy is.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *12th October* 1916.

Since I last wrote I have got permission from the C.O. of the 9th to attach myself temporarily to the 7th, while the 9th go into support in the town and the 7th take the place of the 9th in the trenches. I attach tremendous importance to the presence of the padre in the trenches, so that I can now be with both my battalions in the firing line consecutively. It means a double dose of it for me, with all the discomforts of never having my clothes off, etc., for a fortnight, until both battalions go into rest. This will take place next Saturday and Sunday, when we go to a place about four miles back. It is during the rest week that I shall always have to hammer away at Confirmation classes, etc., so it will not be much of a rest for me, except from the discomforts and noise. It is rough and tumble catch-as-catch-can work, without system of any kind, but the men seem open for all that I can do for them. I look back with envy on my little church with its regular services and the opportunities for talks and classes at Ripon. Not that I should like to be back there for a moment, but the work was so much easier there, and I wish I had some of the facilities here which I had there.

Last Sunday I held services for the battalion which was in support in the town. I discovered a church battered about but not wholly in ruins, and there we had two Celebrations of Holy Communion on the half-wrecked altar and voluntary morning and evening services. All were well attended, though Tommy had to sit on the tiles of the floor which was covered with brick dust. There was great joy in the feeling that though the church had been so sadly desecrated it was being in a sense once more consecrated to the service of God. Where we shall have services next Sunday I do not yet know, it depends where we go to rest and what the facilities are. That is the worst of it, everything has to be left to the last minute.

I like the officers in both battalions very much. They are bright and cheery, and very good company.

Here is lunch, and a good one too. It is welcome to me, as I have had a long bike ride against a strong wind to attend the Divisional Chaplains' Meeting, and feel hungry.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *17th October* 1916.

We are in rest billets. That sounds very nice, doesn't it? I think it sounds nicer than it really is, for we are by no means out of the range of the Bosche guns. Anyhow, two nights ago, for the first time since I left England, I got into pyjamas. I have never appreciated them so much, and I had my first opportunity of using

my flea bag and blankets. So you see I have not had much opportunity of studying myself in the last three weeks.

Our rest billet is a large and fine chateau hitherto almost untouched by shell, which is rather extraordinary considering that the village and every house in the neighbourhood is in the dust. Perhaps the fact that it belonged to an Austrian has something to do with it, or perhaps the Bosche lets it stand to help him to register his guns. Anyhow, it stands almost whole in what must have been beautiful grounds, beautifully wooded and including a lake. In the grounds is a Church Army Hut. We came here on last Saturday night, and I at once arranged my services there for the next day—a Celebration of Holy Communion, two Parade Services, and an evening service. The Celebration was extraordinarily well attended by officers and men. At one of the Parade Services one of the officers played for me on a piano with as many notes missing as there were present, and those that were present were awfully out of tune—in fact it was impossible to make out the tune when it was played over. At the other service one of the men played. Somehow the Parade Services did not go with the swing of the Ripon Parades. It was a rotten little hut of course, perhaps that had something to do with it, and there were only a quarter of the number of men.

The evening service was the feature of the evening. Not many men came as they had duties, and that was a fortunate thing as it

turned out. During the singing of the last hymn the Bosche started shelling. The first landed 100 yards away. The second was dangerously close, and just before it crashed to the ground, there was a dive of my congregation under the benches, and I was facing an invisible congregation. I told them it was all right and that we might as well finish the hymn, and so we went on, when another swish came along and we all flopped down on our bellies under the benches. Crash! I thought the hut was hit this time, crowds of muck came down from the roof. Neither benches nor hut was any protection for us, and as soon as the shower of dirt had subsided there was a stampede to the door. I was left to pick up the lamp and to yell to them to keep calm and run as hard as they could to their billets, while I tore off to the chateau. There I found a mob of officers and men in the cellars, and we had a good laugh over my service. The Bosche kept on sending over his heavy stuff, but he only grazed the chateau though they fell close all round. I am telling you this because I think it ought to amuse you. I can't help chuckling every time I think of that termination to my service. It reminds me of that old poster of 'The Follies' when they were starting in London—'Thousands turned away nightly.' The Bosche repeats the performance every evening since we have been here, so that '*rest* billets' is rather a misnomer, but still it is not like the trenches.

Rain is setting in now, and I hope the mackintosh for which I have indented at

Ordnance will turn up soon. It was most annoying to lose my Burberry, but I was quite content to lose that so long as I had my valise and bag again. One gets hardened to roughing it and rain does not harm me. I am attached to Headquarters Mess, so I have the best of food, and, naturally, a fairly heavy mess subscription. It is wonderful how well we manage in that line under the conditions. For tea, we rely on parcels from home for cakes, etc.

B.E.F., FRANCE, 25*th October* 1916.

Thank you so much for the lovely cake you sent, and for the letter which has just arrived. The cake was delicious—such a beauty, and it naturally went very quickly, 'the proof of the pudding, etc.' Since then I have had a large one also from Mrs ——. It is awfully kind of her. Such a number of people are thinking of me out here. Only twice or three times has a day passed without letters for me. People at Ilkley, and Sunday School kiddies, people at Ripon, as well as all you dears at home, write very often, and it is ripping to have all the news and to know that I am constantly in mind. I do not know how I should exist here were I not conscious of this, for, in spite of the wonderful comradeship amongst us all, there come times when one feels extraordinarily lonely and depressed. It does not do to think much of what the life out here means, in fact, one simply cannot think, for one's brain is on a strain all

day long with the excitement and noise and strangeness of it all. I wish it were merely a nightmare from which one could awake to find oneself among you all round the drawing-room fire, to live at peace and ease all the rest of one's life. I am sure this will make a long break in my life. It seems to me I shall be disinclined to do anything when the war is over, and that is a dreadful thought when I remember that I hold the commission of the King of kings, and 'there is no discharge in that war.'

Oh dear, I must not write to you like this. You need keeping bright as much as I. But there are things which give me the dumps, and the weather, of course, always is one. It looks as if the winter had begun to set in. What the state of things will be when we are in the depth of it I cannot imagine. Already the trench boards are floating in water, which is in places anything up to two feet deep, and where there is no water the mud is the liquid stuff which is brushed into piles in the London streets. We are issued with thigh gum boots, like fishermen's waders, which keep us dry, but even with them on, it is not pleasant making one's way in the trenches. The trenches are collapsing in many places owing to the wet clay of which they are formed. My mackintosh from Ordnance has not yet arrived, but my coat so far has served perfectly well, in fact better than a macintosh would have done, as it would be partly trailing in the trench water. However, I hope it will buck up and come. Another thing which has come with rather a

blow is the news that I am not likely to get home for six months, as leave is no longer to be given through the Chaplains' Department in cases where chaplains are up the line, but through the regiment to which they are attached. Of course I ought not to grumble at that, as there is no reason why I should be given leave more often than the officers here, but it is a bit thick that chaplains at the base, where there is no danger and not the same strain on the nerves, should fare better in the way of leave. Bang goes our idea of a great jollification after Christmas! All the same I do not regret sticking out for the job I have got. It is far the best.

I saw my first aeroplane fight the other day. No machine was brought down, but it opened my eyes to what wonderful feats can be performed on those machines. They circle round each other, firing away with their machine guns, just like moths round a lamp. It is perfectly marvellous.

Rats here are swarming. Huge things as big as cats, and so bold—one almost treads on them sometimes. They come into the dug-outs and fight and squabble. None have yet dared to come on top of me at night, but fellows often are wakened up at night with them crawling on their faces!

I do not think I have written so many letters in any four weeks in my life as I have here (some of them sad ones to wives or mothers of our heroes), and yet my bundle of unanswered letters never gets smaller.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *4th November* 1916.

I sleep in a dug-out with the Medical Officer, and, please notice, *on a bed* and *in pyjamas!* What more comfort could I want? I ought not to get into pyjamas every night in the line. It is against orders, but as I have a long continuous spell here, no objections are taken. So I have a lovely night's rest every night, not even disturbed by the guns, for I am used to them. All that I need to get used to is the rats and mice. They are beggars—crawl all over one, and eat all that they can find. Half of one of your lovely cakes gave them a meal one night, and last night they were driven to eat my shaving brush, soap, and tooth paste! They kindly left me most of these things, however. No rain has come yet, nor I think ever will come, into my abode.

To-morrow is Guy Fawkes' Day—I suppose that out here will be the only place where it will be observed in the traditional way—with rockets and fireworks. But, as this occurs every night of the year, it rather loses its fun!!

B.E.F., FRANCE, 10*th November* 1916.

The war at last seems far away. 'At last' because I have just finished twenty-two days of the trenches, and 'far away' because we are in a camp which reminds me of England rather than France. Once more we have bugles and bands and bagpipes and men on parade grounds, inspections, etc., and over it all, both yesterday and to-day, a glorious sun has been shining,

which makes us forget the awful conditions we have been going through in the trenches, and the ghastly scenes. It is wonderful how the men stick the four days' stretch at a time as they do. It is all right for me—my dug-out is dry and the trenches round it are dry. I only catch it in my rounds. Where the water has been pumped out it is mud which sucks one's feet out of one's gum boots—where it is water one almost has to swim!! That mud is what the men have to stay in day and night. All the same I feel I have been in long enough, though I live there in luxury. The Hun has been getting more lively, and I have seen sights which one wants to forget. Headquarters here is most comfortable. It consists of a long hut, threequarters of which consist of the sleeping quarters—a passage down the middle and cabins or cubicles on either side—one for each officer. At the end of the passage is a door which leads into the dining-room, so we are compact;—pathways of duck-boards outside lead to the road and battalion offices, so that one is conveyed safely over the mud.

I took one day's holiday, and now I am in deadly earnest to get Confirmation instruction going regularly. What a job it is! The men will not come regularly, even when it is possible for them to do so. Bless them, they are out for a rest and why should not they have it? I can't blame them, but it does cause me an awful lot of worry and bother, especially as I have forty-two men to put through before 17th December.

Both my battalions are here—the first time they have ever been together since I have been out, so I am hard at it. I am getting concerts going and am trying to set a badly-run Church Army Hut to rights. The General inspected it this morning and complained of it to the Senior Chaplain. He happened to see me and asked me to do what I could. Result was that I inspected it in great style this afternoon, had the orderlies round with me, and strafed at everything. I think I duly impressed them; at any rate I fancied myself no end! I have drawn up a list of things that must be done to the place, including the re-roofing of the place and the white-washing of the roof inside. I am, besides, placing an order for two dozen chairs, four dozen flags, bunting, a heating apparatus, piano repairing, wire fencing, and the fitting-up of a spare hut as a chapel. Also an additional orderly and a fatigue party to scrub out the place twice a week. I don't know what it all will cost, and the business is that I must make out an estimate for the Division, for they will supply the funds. I have absolutely not the smallest idea!

B.E.F., FRANCE, *20th November* 1916.

You see I have got my fountain pen filled up again, it is a sign and token to you that I have been in touch with civilisation again, and to me it recalls a very happy week at the camp. Now I am back again in the line, and the weather has once more become dirty, but we cannot grumble because it was simply glorious,

though very frosty and cold, at the camp. I managed to get a ride there—the first since I have been out—and enjoyed it immensely. There is something very exhilarating about horseback.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *26th November* 1916.

I have just been out to see a fellow wounded just before entering the trenches, a machine gun bullet through the shoulder, just a nice one for Blighty. There is plenty of that kind of work to do, and I wish they were all as 'cushy' wounds as that. Being up the line, I have very few funerals to take, as here, where casualties and deaths are not too big to cope with, bodies are sent five or six miles back to a well-kept cemetery for burial. I have been strafing about the state of neglect in which some of the graves out here are kept, and have been noting them down and sending reports on their condition to the Graves Registration people—certainly most of them are near up to the trenches, but I do not think that excuses at all.

To the Members of the Boys' Club,
Holy Trinity Mission,
Bradford.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *28th November* 1916.

My dear Boys, or rather I ought to call you 'N.C.O.'s and men!'

I was very pleased to have a line from you all, sent on to me by Mr Glennie (or ought he to be called Colonel Glennie, as Commanding Officer of the Boys' Club Battalion?). It was

written, I understand, in the last half hour before prayers—the time when you used to make my hair almost turn grey with trying to keep you in order, and at some game or other—oh, you boys!! Anyhow, you must have been quiet when you wrote that letter to me, for it is full of all kinds of nice messages, which could not have been written with a noise going on all the time.

I am glad you are all Tommies, though not in khaki. You must do the thing properly, and be as like the chaps out here as you can be. I will give you some tips to show what is expected of soldiers, and consequently what is expected of you.

1. Regularity on Parade. Tommy always has to be in his place. So must you every Monday evening.
2. Obedience to all commands. Tommy has to obey the orders of his officer whether he likes them or not—so must you.
3. Cleanliness. Tommy must be clean—so must you, hands, face, neck, and clean too in your mind, in what you say, and in what you do.
4. Cheerfulness. Tommy must never 'grouse' (I always drop on him if he does)—nor must you.
5. Quietness and reverence at Church Parade. I never hear Tommy talking at services, he sings well and heartily, he prays sincerely, he listens attentively to the address—so must you at the service after prayers.

There you are. There are many more tips I could give you to turn you into proper soldiers, but that is enough to go on with, to learn and practise. Remember this, that every battalion of soldiers has a reputation to keep up, and one bad soldier can spoil that reputation, so pull together and always keep up and improve the name of the Boys' Club.

Yours affectionately,

W. D. GEARE.

B.E.F., FRANCE, 30*th November* 1916.

Out here we are going to try to run the National Mission from December 10-17, and for this we had a big gathering of chaplains yesterday at a town a long way from here into which I biked, to spend a 'quiet time' conducted by Canon Cunningham who came out from England for the purpose. I wish Padre S—— had been out here, for if so I would almost certainly have seen him there, for the chaplains of two Army Corps were all together. I am afraid I got nothing out of it except a day's holiday with a lunch with a friend of mine at a restaurant! Why it was so useless to me was because it is practically impossible for me to attempt it in the conditions in which I work, and also because I shall be busy preparing my boys for the Confirmation which coincides with the last day of the Mission. I talked to the Senior Chaplain and said how impossible it was, and he agreed and said that he would not give any directions about it, but

would let the individual chaplains take it or leave it as they liked. I left early because I wanted to bike back before dark, and also to get up the line because a 'show' was coming off, and there would most certainly be casualties. I got a good way before darkness fell. I simply loathe biking by night up the line. There can be no lights, of course, on any vehicle, and so it is a dreadful strain for the road becomes an unending stream of transport wagons, motor lorries, ambulance cars, etc. The row on the stone sets is indescribable, and as one skids about on the road, one is all the time fearing lest one may be run down by something overtaking. As I passed the guns they were all thundering and cracking and flashing, for the show had begun. It is no joke travelling on a road through the batteries, one's ears buzz the whole time, and one's head is full of the row. I just got up to the trenches in time for the first casualties.

I don't know what Mr —— is talking about, *re* chaplains writing home to say that the men know nothing about Jesus Christ—certainly many know *little* about Him, but they know *of* Him. They don't know how His life and death affects their own life and death—but how many fine folks at home know much more? It is the old, old fault of our Church —the lack of teaching—but to single out our soldiers as an example, and to shut one's eyes to the state at home is slanderous. If only people were as ready and willing to learn as our boys are out here the fault would be

remedied. Tommy has got hold of something which I hope the National Mission will instil into people at home—viz. the need of God, and on that one can build. He is not a theologian, friend Tommy, and one cannot make him one however long the war lasts! He knows Christ died for him—the crucifixes out here teach him that—how I wish we used them more in England—but he does not know exactly how. I always feel the question, 'What think ye of Christ?' is one that would stump many people who are called after His Name.

I now stay entirely with the 9th when they come out of the line and go into the cellars of the Convent. I go with them instead of staying in the trenches all the time until we go into rest. When the 7th is in the trenches I visit them from the town in the morning, that is all.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *4th December* 1916.

Last Sunday evening I visited and took a service at an advanced section of artillery close behind our lines. I had got to know the officer, and he asked me to have dinner with him sometime. I asked him if the Artillery Chaplain had been his way and he said 'No,' so I said 'May I come and take a service with your men on Sunday and have dinner with you afterwards.' He was awfully pleased with the idea. So I trotted round to them at the appointed time, and was given a huge welcome. The men had been talking about it all the week. They had put a room tidy in the farm, by the guns, where they

were billeted and made it draught-proof. When I went in with the officer, I found a table with a white cloth on it, a glass of water, a prayer-book, and a polished shell-case for me to take back as a souvenir—they had done all this on their own initiative. It was a great service, though, of course, there were only 18 men, as there were only two guns to man. They had not had a service since February.

We are soon going back to that rest camp again, but we shall be in the line for Christmas Day.

Here are the rations, and I must give them this letter to take back to the Transport lines and post for me, so I must come to an abrupt end.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *13th December* 1916.

At last I have got some time to get off a letter to you. I do hope you have not been worrying to know what has happened. I simply have not had a moment to myself since we came into the rest camp. For we are back again to the camp which did me so much good last time we were in it. It is the week before Confirmation, and I am seizing every moment to get a class in. It is worrying work, as the men get detailed to this, that, and the other job, others are away on courses, others are sick, and one wonders how many will eventually be confirmed. They are very keen on the classes and anxious to be confirmed, and I do not want them to be disappointed. Anyhow, I shall be jolly glad when Sunday comes and I can slack off a bit. Besides

this, I have been helping to start a Battalion Officers' Mess while we are out of the line, also the Battalion Canteen and chip shop for the men! Who would have thought that I would come down as low as selling chipped potatoes! Then there are concerts to be got up and the National Mission to be put on foot. I have just returned from taking one of these services at a camp half an hour's walk away. In my Division we are not doing much at the Mission at present—we are waiting for the time when the Division is relieved and we can go out for a month's rest, which ought to take place some time in January.

I wish I could be home for Christmas, but we shall make the best of things, though we shall be in the trenches on the Day. It is no good to regret; my thoughts, of course, will be with you all, and I hope my absence will not mar the joys. You want cheering up at home, because you have so much time to think of all the sadness. Out here we have not got that time, and I wish sometimes you could get a peep at us and see our jollity. You might think there was no war on sometimes. So take some of our joy with you at Christmas, and *don't* pity us. I shall get my leave sometime—perhaps in January.

B.E.F., FRANCE, 18*th December* 1916.

One week to Christmas—and now that I have got my rush over I must write to you again, and send you my best wishes a bit nearer the right time. I hope it will be a very blessed time for

you all, quite calm and restful in the middle of all the anxiety and bother and worry which all you people in England have—far more than we have out here. Our minds are occupied with the little bit immediately in front of us, and for which we are responsible. You have so much more to think of. Try to shut your minds to everything except the Festival. Don't bother about my not being with you. You must get used to that, because it is four years I think now since I was with the family party, and, as a parson, I do not see much hope of ever being with you on the Day. The 9th will *not* be in the trenches on Christmas Day but in support in the town, so the men will have a good Christmas dinner and all will be good cheer. The 7th will be in the line, and of course I shall try to get up to see them all in the afternoon after my services in the town with the 9th. So you see I shall have a jolly day. As President of the Headquarters Mess I have the business of ordering our dinner. I am trying to get a turkey from a town, and E——'s and others' plum puddings will be requisitioned. I guarantee that I shall never have had a Christmas spread such as we are going to have! So don't think of me roughing it. It is the very last thing we shall be doing! So put your mind at rest.

I told you my rush was over—it ended on the last day of our ten days' rest! We had orders to start a Battalion Officers' Mess during the ten days. In the line, of course, such a thing is impossible—there has to be separate company

messes, and Headquarters Mess with the companies. Consequently, in ordering Battalion Officers' Mess in rest camp, the idea is to bring all the officers together to get to know each other better. That, of course, is all very nice, but the labour attached to ten days' messing is appalling. This is a little of what it means—find a suitable hut, getting stoves, benches, and tables for it, collecting all company mess property together, laying in a stock of goods and edibles, getting subscriptions, returning property to companies, disposing of surplus stock among companies again, as well as arranging dinners, etc., and keeping waiters, cooks, etc., up to the scratch, and being responsible for any complaints. With the help of another officer I took it on, as I had been running the H.Q. Mess. I said that after my job at Ripon I would not take on another mess, but I felt I ought to take my share again and did so. It went well as far as meals were concerned, but it is impossible to have a perfect mess in ten days in most uncomfortable quarters. That was one thing that kept me busy until rest was over. Another thing was Confirmation, which took place on the last day, Sunday (yesterday), by the Deputy Chaplain-General (Bishop Gwynne). I presented 35 candidates, splendid men; one of them I baptized two days previously. It was the Divisional Confirmation, and so there were crowds of men, and the service was most impressive. I was very pleased with my total—it worked out larger than I thought, though I had over 50 names. Some men had no oppor-

tunities of attending classes owing to being on courses of instruction, others were wounded or sick, and so I have got them on my list for another time. Only one man gave up. The C.O. was very pleased indeed with my total. He takes a great interest in my work. As I went into the place where the Confirmation was held I met, on his way out, a member of my Bible Class in Ilkley who holds a commission in the West Yorks and is somewhere near. I had time hardly for one word, as I was seeing about getting my men in. He is the first friend I have met, with the exception of G——, on my way out.

Now I must stop, as we are leaving our support billets in the Convent cellars to go up the line for five days. Life is nothing but five-day moves! There is not much newness left in my valise; its exterior is mud now!

B.E.F., FRANCE, *26th December* 1916.

You have all been most fearfully lavish, and I feel that you are sending me things that you are yourselves doing without in these stringent days of war economy. There is no such thing as war economy out here in the matter of food. I have never fed so well in all my life—I and we all feel that it is a good thing to make the best of everything, and if we are denied luxuries in one way we set about to make up for it in another way. All this is by way of preparing you for the menu of the Head-quarters Christmas dinner, for which I was

responsible, being Mess President. Here it is—it will make you people at home jealous.

Hors-d'œuvres	Curried Eggs.	*Wines and Drinks.*
Soup . .	Mock Turtle.	Champagne.
Fish . . .	Whiting.	Whisky.
Entrée . .	Steak Pie.	Lime Juice.
Chef-d'œuvres	Turkey (Roast).	Beer.
Sweet . .	Plum Pudding.	Port.
Savoury . .	Cheese Balls.	Mineral Waters.
	Dessert.	Liqueur Benedictine.
	Coffee.	

Now, what do you think of that!! How the dickens did we do it? Well, there is a town some miles back where we held the Confirmation, and we have a transport of course, and we had a certain amount of money in reserve in mess funds, and we were in the cellars of that Convent and not in the trenches. Does this explain? I got great kudos for putting on a dinner like that without increasing the mess subscription of 5 francs a day. I was toasted and 'For he's a jolly good-fellow'-ed, and cheered. It needed, of course, a bit of organising. Now that will show you why I implored you not to be pitying me on Christmas Day! Of course I would ten thousand times rather have been with you all, but one does not allow oneself to think too much of that, and all the good cheer and the fun is, I must confess, to prevent ourselves regretting.

Christmas Eve after dinner we all turned to with decorating. Paper festoons and flags had been sent out to us, and we took only three-quarters of an hour to transform our cellar. It looks very fine!

On Christmas Day I had Celebrations at 7, 8, 9 and 10. The officers came splendidly, but the men were a bit disappointing. That splendid dinner was at 1.30 in the afternoon—though I wanted to get up to the trenches to visit the 7th and give them my wishes, I was compelled to get over the dinner! In the evening, before supper, I went round the men and got a party of men to serenade us during supper, with which the C.O. was very pleased. After dinner Headquarters went round to visit the company messes. Perhaps I ought to have explained that Headquarters consists of the C.O., Second in Command, Adjutant, an attached Major, Intelligence Officer, Medical Officer, and myself. So naturally we have to do things well.

To-day, Boxing Day, the men had their dinner in a ruined church. My word, they did enjoy a real day off all work; and, of course, they got through the dinner of pork and plum pudding quickly enough.

I have had a delightful parcel to-day—from the Infants' Sunday School. It was full of little presents and letters from the kiddies, *e.g.* a sample tablet of Erasmic soap, a toy wrist watch, a packet of cigarettes, 2d., etc., etc. Did I tell you also that one of the mill girls in the Bradford Mission sent me a handkerchief? Such presents as these fill one with delight. I have also had a fine lot of letters and cards from Ilkley. I am very pleased to be so well remembered.

When the 7th are out of the trenches, and on

the day that they eat their Christmas dinner, I shall hold another Christmas Day for them and come away from the trenches for the day, as on Sundays. We go into the line again to-morrow evening—after a very happy five days out.

Now, I must go to bed in my rat-haunted cellar (one of them was in possession of my blankets when I turned in the other night and had a good meal of them!), so good-night.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *8th January* 1917.

My time for letters is very limited now, owing to the fact that two chaplains have gone from the Division—one as Senior Chaplain to another Division, and the other sick; and a third has gone on leave. This means almost doubling the work for those who remain. Fortunately, a new chaplain has arrived.

However, this letter brings with it the welcome news that I expect my leave in about a fortnight's time! Isn't it ripping. Don't get too excited about it because anything may happen to stop it. I am trying to keep calm myself. I shall not be able to let you know anything more definite. You will just find me on the front doorstep some day or night. We are out in a camp, and in a week's time we shall go for a month's rest from the line—so unless something urgent occurs I shall not return to the trenches before leave. I am very thankful for that, as things are getting very lively in our part of the line.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *15th January* 1917.

I am still here and 'sweating on my leave' as the boys express it. When it will come I do not know, but at least another week must go. I reminded one of our officers, who is at Brigade, about it to-day, and he said he would push it for me. When it comes I shall get only a few hours' notice.

Meanwhile I am in Divisional rest, well back from the line, in huts which are cold but which do *not* leak, with the 9th Battalion. The 7th are separated from me some miles away, and I have not yet solved the question of what I can do for them. Life here is full of fun, as all the officers are together in five or six huts. I have a hut divided into four by partitions, and in these little rooms thus made live the Second in Command, the Adjutant, the Medical Officer, and myself.

Before we came here last Saturday I took a horse and rode over to arrange a place for Sunday services, and found a Y.M.C.A. Hut. It was a long ride of 20 kilometres and I feel a bit skin-rubbed, but it did me a lot of good. The march in on Saturday was done in a hail-storm, and I was very glad of my trench coat. I am seizing the opportunity now to go round again for Confirmation candidates. I got thirteen this evening. I want to arrange foot-ball, but the ground is so frightfully muddy and slushy that it seems impossible to play at all at present. Our stay here is for 12 days and then we go to a village not far away, and stay in billets on the village folk.

He arrived home on 23rd January 1917 on a ten days' leave, and it was manifest from his appearance and manner how much his four months' service at the Front, and mostly in the trenches, had tried him, although he had always done his best to hide it by his cheery letters. Whilst at home he was taken ill with influenza, so his leave had to be extended until 12th February, when, in spite of the wish of his doctor that he should wait a while, he returned to the Front, as he did not wish to lose touch with his men.

The following are letters he wrote during the second period of his service at the Front :—

B.E.F., FRANCE, 15*th February* 1917.

By now you will have received my Field Card, telling you of my arrival at the journey's end. The Battalion is not in the line again yet, but finishing the rest—not at the same place where they were when I left them but in a village about four miles away, the name of which I told H——, thinking that we were going to move there. We ought to move into the line next Saturday, but it is not certain yet whether we shall do so, as a case of Scarlet Fever has been notified in two of our companies which are now isolated from the rest of the Battalion. This is a very ordinary small town consisting of one street with plenty of estaminets and outlying farms, in the barns of which the

men are billeted. My own billet is in an estaminet, and I mess with one of the companies *pro tem.*—the accommodation at Headquarters being insufficient.

I can see very little of the men here. There is no Recreation Hut for them, and in the evening they walk about in the town or go to the estaminets—they do not stay in their barns as, of course, they are not allowed to smoke there owing to the straw. Consequently I go out with them in the morning and do manual work with them, which consists of clearing away ground at the side of the railway. I have done a good deal of picking this morning —very healthy and warming.

Since I was away, the Second in Command has left with a good appointment on the Staff of the Army we are in, three officers have gone into the Flying Corps, the Medical Officer has been changed, and now the worst blow has fallen—the C.O. will be leaving us shortly. We are all very distressed at this, for we feel we shall never get another C.O. like the present one.

B.E.F., FRANCE, 19*th February* 1917.

In addition to the Scarlet Fever another epidemic has broken out—German Measles—and about 300 men altogether are isolated. This has kept us back from the line, I am glad to say, and presumably will continue to do so for some few weeks. Another Battalion has taken our place—it is to be hoped only

temporarily—in the Brigade. I am anxious to know what is going to happen to me, whether I should leave this Battalion and attach myself to the Battalion that has taken our place in Brigade and look after them and the 7th. I don't want to leave the 9th, so have written to the Senior Chaplain saying I am isolated with the 9th. The 7th, of course, and the Battalion that has taken our place are in the line now.

I had a busy day with services yesterday,—as I went round to the four isolated billets and gave them services, as well as the Battalion Parades. The men are not allowed to send off any letters, so I have undertaken to send cards off to the next-of-kin of all the isolated men, to tell them that their sons or husbands cannot write but are well. This will keep them from anxiety. It will take some days before they are all off in the post!

I still go down to the men working on the railway every morning and handle a pick with them. It is very healthy, though strenuous work, but I can stop when I am tired, and they cannot, poor beggars!

I am feeling very fit again now. I was certainly very tired on arrival, but that worked off the next day.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *24th February* 1917.

I am writing this just before going back to the trenches after six weeks' absence from them in rest. The authorities have refused to take notice of our German Measles, and

now that the Scarlet Fever period is over, we have left our village and arrived at the ruined town last night for one day's sojourn, which is over in half an hour, until five days when we return to the Convent. Last night and to-day we have not spent at the Convent, as it was engaged, but, instead, at the Prison. For the first time in my life I have slept in a cell! This was the place, you know, where I had my Church Services. Unfortunately now the cellar has been taken for more billets, and I have had to engage the ruined Church where the Christmas dinners were held, and fix services for not more than a company at a time, owing to shelling.

It does seem ages since my leave. I try to forget it, because it makes me pine to be back with you all again, and that is useless in view of the months that must elapse before my turn comes round again.

Chaplains in the line now are to have a week's rest now and then at the Chaplains' General Headquarters for the purpose of being quiet, thinking, and discussion. We all welcome the idea. Also there is a scheme whereby at the end of four months the line chaplains are to be relieved for two months by a chaplain at the base, and the two shall change places for that period. It sounds all right but will be difficult to comply with, as it is left to the line chaplain to say when he wants the change, and we all feel that it will be difficult for us to bunk off for two months when things are getting warm! The alternative, viz. to be ordered to

go at a set time, also presents difficulties, as it might spoil a great amount of work, *e.g.* preparation for Confirmation. Anyhow the idea is good.

I am finishing the letter in my dug-out, having arrived at the trenches. I leave them again for the day, to-morrow, for services in the town with the 7th. You can imagine how sick we feel at coming back again to the war after the Divisional Rest—somehow we are out of training now for it, but we shall settle down again to it in a day or two.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *3rd March* 1917.

We have just finished a longer stay than usual in the trenches—or rather we are finishing it, for we are waiting for the 7th to come up and relieve us. Relief nights are dreadful businesses, for it is a matter of 3 hours or so before the relief is complete, and we at Headquarters have to wait and wait until all the companies are out. This is the end of our first turn in the trenches since we were in rest, and on the whole it has been less lively than it was six weeks ago—all the 'stunts' having been made by us and not by the Hun. I have shaken down to things now again after my leave—I must say I loathed the first two or three days in the trenches again!

Our new C.O. seems a very nice man—a regular soldier and young and vivacious, and so far we all get on very well with him. He is very pleased that I should stay with them in the line. I asked his permission, and he said he

would be very glad if I would—regretting that no other chaplain he had come across had done the same.

I am so glad you like *The Gospel of the Hereafter*. It is all so clear and convincing, and certainly it settled my mind over many things of which I was dubious before.

I have been busy lately cemetery-inspecting. It is very sad that so many are knocked about all over the place by shell holes, and it seems almost impossible to keep them in order. However, I think that light-duty men of the Battalions near might be employed on them, and have suggested this to the Senior Chaplain.

I have also been working in the evenings on map-copying. The C.O. is awfully pleased with the results. You can imagine how I love doing them.

To-morrow I have six services in the morning and two in the afternoon, and at the end of it no night's rest as we have got a night stunt on up the line, to which I shall trudge in the depths of the night to look after the casualties. Monday I shall slack.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *7th March* 1917.

We are out of the trenches and are back at the camp for ten days—arriving here at 12.30 A.M. last night. The weather to-day has been bitterly cold and the huts are appallingly draughty, but it is better than being in the line.

I told you in my last letter that we were doing a bit of a show last Sunday night. It

came off very well, and we collared some prisoners. Unfortunately our best officer was very badly wounded, and, of course, we had casualties in killed and wounded among the men. I had a job of carrying one fellow with a wound in the foot 1500 yards down a communication trench on my back, helped by a stretcher-bearer, who took it in turns with me. I thought we would never get him to the Aid Post. When all the men had got back, I had hot coffee, cakes, chocolate, and cigarettes ready for them, provided by the canteen funds. It was 4 A.M. on Monday morning before I got to bed that night, after a busy Sunday!

B.E.F., FRANCE, 21*st March* 1917.

I have just finished breakfast and am going to write you a short note before I do my round, which always takes place in the mornings. I usually write in the evenings, or after tea when we are in the trenches, but I have had so much to fill into that spare part of the day in the shape of arranging a new system of account-keeping and stock-keeping for my canteen, and also writing casualty letters to next-of-kin, that everything else has lately been crowded out.

Confirmation classes are proceeding gradually. Among my candidates I have one and possibly two officers, with which I am very pleased. The Confirmation is probably in Holy Week, unless we can get it postponed. It will not be of the size of last one, but I hope for 25 men.

The class in the 9th is a most interesting one, and we have very lively discussions together. Two of the men are Wesleyans, though they have signed on as Church of England, and they are very interested in many points with which they have up to now been at variance. Whether or not I shall be able to take these men all the way to Confirmation this time, or whether they will need longer instruction, I do not know.

B.E.F., FRANCE, 25*th March* 1917.

I have just had a bath! That does not seem to you very much to write about, but, as a matter of fact, it is a very important episode in our lives out here. Usually the event takes place when we are in the camp, but I could not wait so long this time—a protracted period of sleeping in clothes is not pleasant. In this town there is a bath-house, unfortunately above ground, and events have not made it advisable to use it. Consequently the bath took place in my cellar in a canvas arrangement which once was a bath—*my* bath—but since passing through various people's hands it cannot be graced with such a name. Anyhow it did duty, though it made the cellar even more wet than it was before, and after the complicated ritual of sitting in it with feet outside, and sitting outside with feet inside, I have passed out clean and have donned a clean set of clothes. My batman has gone to Hospital with septic sores, consequently I have got a temporary man who

needs a good deal of persuasion, but B—— is returning to duty soon, and I shall not have any longer to make my present man believe that it *is* possible to get an extra petrol-tin of hot water, or that there *is* enough fuel for a brazier by the side of my bath!

All this is sweet nothings! It is only such things that can be written about—censor or no censor.

I have had a full day of services as usual. To-day I have found a new place for them, viz. the Convent cellars vacated by one of our companies. I told you that my place at the prison has been taken for billets, and the ruined church again has become too risky even to allow a company in it at a time. By the by, since I was last home some of the buildings have undergone structural alterations! notably the ones I said were not so bad as the others. They will soon spoil this beautiful town!! The question now is—'Is it better to be in the town or the trenches?'

B.E.F., FRANCE, 31*st March* 1917.

Thursdays seem to be the days when your letters arrive—it says a great deal for the regularity of the postal delivery this end. Occasionally (*e.g.* to-day) there is no post, but such blank days only occur about once a week at the most. Thank you for writing so often.

It was a pity —— was not confirmed, but probably she was not much in earnest about the matter. I always feel so annoyed when mothers

or any one interfere with Confirmation. The candidates are at an age of discretion, and the whole point of being confirmed at the time of life that people usually have reached before the rite is administered in our Church of England (and not at 7 years old or so as in the Roman Church), lies in the one fact that it is up to the candidates and them alone to make the decision, except, of course, the priest who has the responsibility of judging their fitness. If others are to put their finger in the pie, Confirmation might just as suitably be administered at baptism as it was done for centuries in the Early Church. At Confirmation we have done with proxies and sponsors and have got a mind of our own.

I don't want you to get anxious at all when I tell you we are in the trenches. I tell it you because I know that by the time the letter reaches you we shall be temporarily relieved and having five days in the town. Soon we shall be in the camp again. I shall have a busy time then, as, with luck, we shall be there for Easter Day and Confirmation Day is Easter Tuesday—the service will be at the camp,so it is very convenient for me and my boys. I wonder if the Brigade will get up any more sports. You were wrong in supposing I got them up before—it was a Brigade thing, not a Battalion merely: what I did was to whip up entries from the 9th and to act as Timekeeper on the invitation of Brigade. Ordinarily there is very little time for games, for the days are taken with drills and inspections, and cleaning up. The camp is situated in a

wood. It will be lovely there in the summer if we still are in this part of the world. I forgot to tell you that last time we were in the camp we all went into a gas chamber to test our box respirators. It will be a comfort to you, as it was to me, to know that not the slightest trace of gas can be felt with them on. They are wonderful things, as the gas was the deadliest that has yet been used against us.

I have been busy at work with a party of men putting an old cemetery at the back of our trenches into order. When I first saw it, it was almost unrecognisable as a cemetery, and one had to look close to discover graves. Now every grave has a cross, and the Graves Registration Commission have found out most of the names, and what we have been doing is to pile up the graves and make them tidy, and filling up the numerous shell holes. You can imagine what a job it is when I say that it took the whole of the day filling up one shell hole with bricks—the holes are huge.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *9th April* 1917.

We came out of the line on Good Friday and are at the rest camp—or rather one company is—the rest of the Battalion is temporarily scattered to the four winds, as also is the 7th Battalion. It upset all my arrangements for Good Friday. I could have no services owing to the move, and on Easter Day I could only have a Company Parade of the 9th. The 7th had not gone off for Easter Day, but owing to the fact that

they had only arrived at the camp in the small hours of the morning the services for them were voluntary but were extraordinarily well attended! I had other services for the Trench Mortar Battery, Brigade Signallers, and Machine Gun Corps, so yesterday was a busy day.

Confirmation was fixed for Wednesday next, and when I started this letter I was at my wits' end to know how to sweep up my candidates from all the different places and get them 8 miles or so to the place. But a telegram has just arrived from the Senior Chaplain to say that the D.C.G. is ill and cannot confirm the men. It is a great relief. But now I do not know how to employ my time here with just a company of men. I must be here because the canteen is with me here. What I shall do is to get my horse up from the Transport and ride over to see them.

B——, my servant, is in hospital in England now. Since he left I have sacked my temporary servant, and have got a really good fellow again. The chances are that B—— will be sent back to any battalion now that he is evacuated. If so, I shall stick to this fellow, though if B—— returns I shall have him again.

B.E.F., FRANCE, 16*th April* 1917.

I hope you had a helpful season. With me it was, in one sense, a disappointing day—as, after I had made all arrangements here in the camp for services, the 9th were ordered to split up into different places, and I had only 50 men or

less to minister to; the 7th only arrived in the camp early on Easter morning, and their C.O. would only allow a voluntary service, which, however, I am glad to say, was well attended. Communicants were rather disappointing, but there were so few men to come to Communion, that perhaps the proportion of those who came was fair. I had just time to get another chaplain to look after the scattered companies of the 9th, and he says that they came well to Communion.

For another company I got a horse out and rode over to them last Friday for their Easter services. The Confirmation was to have been last Wednesday, and I was in a stew to know how to collect my men together for it, but at the last moment the Deputy Chaplain-General was taken ill and it has had to be postponed till he is able to confirm. I hope it will not be postponed for long because life is short.

Since we have been out I have been having a good deal of riding in visiting the men, and it has done me a lot of good.

This evening I am playing in a football match—for the first time since peace. And then to-morrow we say good-bye to the camp—and the Battalion will be all together again.

B.E.F., FRANCE, 21*st April* 1917.

We are billeted in a Reformatory at the moment. I have not done badly in spending some of my days in a prison, a convent, and a reformatory! Our usual routine and pro-

gramme has been changed, and we are going to hold a piece of line adjoining our old position.

To-day is Saturday, and it is 4.30, and I have not yet started my Sunday's addresses. I have eight services to take in various parts. I shall have tea and then start to work. One of my two canteen men has had to go to Hospital, and I have had to spend a great deal of the week at canteen business.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *1st May* 1917.

It has been and still is simply gorgeous weather, and it seems more than ever a sacrilege to pass these days in warfare. However, just now the 9th is out of the line for five days in the camp, and so we can enjoy the weather to the full. Camp is more than ever welcome this time, as we have been holding the part of the line which, before the push, was considered the trickiest bit on the Western front, and, as it was our first experience of it, we have been anxious. It adjoins our old part. We came out on Sunday night—somehow reliefs generally seem to take place on Sunday nights, also strafes—and came down here to bed at 4.30 A.M.

Fortunately I only had six services that Sunday, but still I felt very disinclined to get up on the next day, but I had funerals to take which compelled me to get up earlier than the others. The Chaplain-General came out a week ago on a tour, and summoned the chaplains of our corps in the afternoon of Monday in

the town some miles back of which I have one post card in the collection I left at home. I always get bored with conferences and meetings, but I was glad to meet there, among some Y.M.C.A. workers, a friend of mine who was at the Clergy School with me, but left in my first term. It took me some time to put a name to him—we kept staring at each other until it flashed into my mind who he was.

To-day we have seen the most thrilling air fight that any of us have yet beheld. Of course they are very common things out here, but the manœuvring of the planes was something which passed all bounds of comprehension. Birds could not do what they did on those machines —looping the loop head over tails and side ways, nose-dives straight down, tail-dives, almost perpendicular climbs. The Bosche machine and ours must be as near perfection as possible. I am glad to say that in this case the Bosche was downed, but really he was such a sportsman that I cannot help feeling sorry he was killed—and not taken prisoner. Gentlemanly warfare only exists now in the air.

B.E.F., FRANCE, 11*th May* 1917.

Here I am sweltering in the dug-out with my coat off and shirt sleeves rolled, just going to settle down to a letter to you before our battalion is relieved from the line. Saturday is the relief night this time, not Sunday, and if anything it makes it worse for me, as it will be dawn before

we get settled down to sleep in strange billets. I have not been able to arrange any services yet, as I do not know whether I shall find a place sufficiently protected to allow even ten men to gather together. It makes it very difficult, but out here any day is Sunday and no day is Sunday—the war has to go on. It is just chance that the reliefs work out so badly from my point of view. Operations have to go on and services necessarily are a luxury out here. As a matter of fact we have been very lucky to be able to arrange so many, as they have to be held in that town which latterly has been ceaselessly bombarded. Of course when we are out on rest such things work out smoothly. Please don't think that the chaplains and their work are not considered—they are, but there is a war on.

We have had another successful show against Fritz last night. I wish I could tell you all about it. Anyhow it cost us only two slight casualties, and Fritz a good amount in killed, wounded, and prisoners. I bandaged one Bosche up. Three of them had the Iron Cross so they were not chicken-hearted beggars.

B.E.F., FRANCE, 21*st May* 1917.

Fortunately we can make the most of the weather for we are out, *i.e.* our brigade, in a village for ten days doing training of a special nature. We went here by train and foot. It is a small and typical village with a fairly big

church, a square, and one principal street in which all our officers are billeted, the men occupy the barns of the farms dotted about. It is lovely going into billets again and sleeping on a bed with sheets. You have no idea of the enjoyment. As we were moving into a village with shops, I pretty well cleared out my canteen before coming here, but on arrival the people put up their prices so exorbitantly that I set to work to put my canteen on a larger scale than I have done before, and have captured all the trade in food-stuffs. I have taken a disused shop with counters and shelves, and, by taking a limber and riding in or sending one of my men into another village seven miles away and buying large quantities from a branch of the Expeditionary Force Canteen there, I have got my shelves full. You can judge of my success when I tell you we took close on 500 francs in one and a half hours on the day we opened. This keeps me busy in that line and gives me a good deal of riding at the same time, while the men are away until after tea. Then come concerts, Confirmation classes, football, etc., which are left to me to organise. I have been rather anxious as I watched rather a serious clique growing among the officers, and so last night I got up an officers' sing-song in one of the company messes. The piano I bargained for at a house in the village. At least there was not much bargaining about it, for the woman was adamant in not allowing us to move it away under payment of less than 20 francs!

Church Parades yesterday were big affairs in the open—the first open-air parades I have held out here; and for Communion I engaged a room—the first time I have held Communion in anything else than a hut or a ruin. I had four open-air parades and two Celebrations.

This change is doing me and us all the world of good. I am browning fast and getting any amount of exercise.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *23rd May* 1917.

I am very interested in your hospital work, especially in your new experiences at ——. I think you will like the new work all right when you get used to the red tape of the army which runs through all its branches, though I can quite see that the work will not be so interesting. By the way, I was very interested that you had come across one of the 9th boys (or was it 7th). I cannot recall his name. He was not one of my boys, for F——, the chaplain he spoke of, is the Nonconformist padre. In each Brigade there are two C. of E. chaplains, one R.C. and one Nonconformist. All the same I wonder at his not knowing me better. Really I am beginning to feel quite proud of my sister who speaks to the King's uncle!

You mention the strikes. My word you should hear what we out here have to say of those strikers! There are two courses which Tommy recommends for the Government to take, either (1) shoot the leaders; (2) send them all out here and replace them by the fine lads who have been

living on 6d. a day out here, and think themselves lucky to have a life to live at all. There ought to be no talking with the strikers—they ought to be dealt with without a word in either of these two ways. It would soon stop the nonsense of the fellows who are making their pile with risk which is infinitesimal compared with the lads here. The blood of the men here simply boils to think of the treachery. If *our* men desert they are shot.

In my letter to —— I have told him that we are well out of it for a bit. We are away from the appalling flatness and monotony of 20 feet above sea level and are among hills, trees, and lanes—it is perfect heaven. The sun shines and the country looks beautiful after just enough rain. The men are out from 8 till 4.30 in the Training area, and we have lunch out there, picnicking on the grass. We might be altogether a different battalion, so much good has the work in open ground and air done us.

My horse unfortunately is not well, and I have been deprived of him for three days, but I have had some good rides and he ought to be well again soon. It is lovely to get such exercise, and I feel simply gloriously fit.

I had a bad piece of news the other day. Our organist, D——, was killed within a fortnight of coming out. He was such a brilliant musician, gifted beyond words and a splendid type of a thorough Christian layman, with his abilities simply consecrated. If I return to Ilkley I feel I shall *hate* to hear the sound of that organ again.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *4th June* 1917.

We are still out of the trenches and enjoying life to the full, the weather still keeps fine and sunny. Last Saturday afternoon I had a twelve-mile ride with the Adjutant to a town where I had to go to report when I first came out—the Headquarters of my Department. We arrived at about 5 P.M., had tea, did some shopping, listened to the band in the park, had dinner, and then rode back—rather an exertion after a dinner.

We had Brigade competitions and sports the other day. The 9th won all the military events except one, but very few of the athletic events. The former, of course, were far the more important, and our men say, 'If we are not athletes, we *are* soldiers.' At the parade the Brigadier distributed 3 Military Crosses and 1 D.C.M. to the 9th. Since I have been with the Battalion we have gained 5 Military Crosses, 1 D.C.M., and 4 Military Medals, so we have not been sitting still. Very few decorations, not more than two or three, have been won by the Battalions of the Brigade put together.

Yesterday the Doctor and I had tea with the village Doctor and his wife and daughter. Madame could not speak any English, but the Doctor and daughter got on quite well. I am afraid Madame consequently got left out in the cold. I started off in great style with her, but my vocabulary got less and less the more she talked back to me, that eventually I almost gave her up. They are very nice people and the

introduction came about through the fact that our doctor is billeted there.

B.E.F., FRANCE, 18*th June* 1917.

The garden at home seems to be doing grandly, thanks to the family gardeners. You would not believe your eyes if you could see the flowers in the dug-out as I write. The back of our trenches runs through what was a huge garden, and in spite of the ruins of it, rose trees are out in profusion of all colours, and naturally we pick them and stick them into our broken-bottle vases. Every dug-out is as gay with roses as the best decorated drawing-room in London in peace time. Fancy that after three years' neglect they should still be so magnificent.

The weather for the last six weeks has been tropical, and we live and move and have our being in shirt sleeves. This afternoon we have had a torrential thunder-storm which has refreshed the air a bit.

B.E.F., FRANCE, 21*st June* 1917.

We have been having some rain-storms lately, and thunder, which make a very pleasant interlude in the long period of fearfully hot weather. I have never felt the heat so much as this year so far as I can remember, and, when one is in for a long spell in the trenches, and you have to forego the luxuries of cold baths, and cut down clean clothing to a minimum, one gets little relief from it.

As regards Sir Oliver Lodge's Book *Raymond*, I think rather differently from you. I have not had a chance of reading the book, but I understand it is being very widely read, and at any rate it is produced at a time when spiritualism is spreading rapidly owing to the sadness of bereavement everywhere, and the longing of people to learn something of the condition and life of their dear ones. That being so, it is time for the Church to reckon with the new and strange doctrine—it is just what St Paul used to do in his epistles when he tackled heresies of other and similar types. A book like *Raymond* will be spreading questionings and wonderings among Christian people, and it ought, in my opinion, clearly to be defined how far we can go along those lines while holding to our faith, and when we must stop. Sir Oliver Lodge, up to a point, can be of the utmost value to Christianity—beyond that point detrimental. He is a man of tremendous value to the world of science—one of the greatest men in that respect that ever lived, and I always think it a tremendous testimony to the truth of the Resurrection which we have in the Gospel, that he should arrive at the same truth by a different and in one sense the more modern way of science. He is too wonderful a man to ignore or ridicule. He is absolutely sincere in what he says and believes—and consequently he cannot be ignored by the Church. The Church must keep pace with current thought, and go with it or against it. If the Church ignores it she will in turn be ignored. Personally, I think practical

sermons have had their run to a certain extent, and the crying need now is for teaching. It is not easy for the clergy to teach, and it is not easy for the laity to be taught, but they both ought to submit to it. Ignorance of the Christian faith, of the history and traditions of the Church, of Sacraments, is appalling, and without such background practical sermons amount to nothing more than exhortations to be good and do good because it is the proper thing to be and do.

These are my ideas strengthened infinitely since I have worked among men. Practical Christianity the men have got to a surprising degree, but they know nothing of the truths we hold so dear, and it is the Church's fault for not teaching those truths.

B.E.F., FRANCE, 29*th June* 1917.

You will be as pleased as I am just now to know that at last I am out of the trenches, after going through a rotten time there. One of our chaplains, who looks after the troops in the back area, has gone on leave, and the Senior Chaplain ordered me to come down from the line to-day and to stay at our transport lines over the week-end to arrange for and take the services at the back. So now I am out of it and shall not go back to it as the Battalion will be relieved in a day or two, and I will join it again on rest. Already I have been into the town, and had a bath and shampoo, and an afternoon sleep, and now am looking forward to a night in pyjamas

after three weeks in my clothes—it is a great relief, and the next thing to look forward to is the village again, or a different village perhaps, a billet, sheets, and the noise of the guns almost drowned by the distance we shall be away from them. Then our experiences will be laughed at instead of being too vivid.

My leave depends on circumstances, but there is a possibility—mind you, only a possibility—that I may be home in a fortnight. I am not thinking of it yet at all, because probably it will be a wash-out, but my turn comes round then.

The post from England has been very irregular lately. For three days there has either been no post or else only a very few letters. I have been without anything in the letter line during that period. You have no idea what a blank it makes when a day passes without letters. But the letter service really is so wonderful that we cannot complain. Do you ever think that a man risks his life to bring your letters to me?

Well, we are all flourishing and especially so at present when there is a succession of officers and men going to and coming back from Blighty, and it takes a very little to make us happy and rollicking.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *5th July* 1917.

I have just finished censoring 42 letters and now I will start to write one myself.

I, too, am on holiday now in a different village from the one where we were resting last

time—a bit more of a village—it does not possess a single shop. Headquarters is in a farm, with the advantage of a kitchen garden, fowls and pigeons, which we find very useful for our consumption. Despite the marvels this war has brought out in the shape of tinned goods, it is a glorious change to get again to the real articles. The raspberries and currants are gigantic in size and delicious in taste, and we gorge ourselves with them and cream at lunch and dinner every day. Once again I have had to expand my canteen to enormous dimensions. There is a squadron of the Flying Corps here, and in the mornings I go down on one of their cars to a town 10 kilometres away and buy in huge stocks of anything that is obtainable. Cigarettes for the men, unfortunately, as well as biscuits and chocolate, are almost impossible to get, which makes my task a difficult and worrying one. Of course, the canteen is not just a place for buying eatables. I try to stock anything the men and officers can want of any description and variety—in fact, it is really a general stores.

To-morrow, unfortunately, we have to shift our position to a place two miles further on, where there is no accommodation, and most of the Battalion will be under canvas. All we can be provided with is tents—what we are going to do for tables and benches, no one knows.

Now, about my leave. I shall not take it yet awhile, and I am bound to leave it in uncertainty of course. It will be for ten days—that is all that leave ever extends to unless a course in England is attached to it. One thing is certain,

when I feel that I can conscientiously take it, I will—but there is a lot between me and leave. Don't let any speculation as to when I come home hinder you from making any plans you like to make.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *12th July* 1917.

I have not written a letter to you since we left the village of which I gave you some description in my last letter. It is some days since we left that village and came into this one. As in the case of the other, it cannot legitimately be called even a village—just a few farms—not enough to billet the Battalion, let alone the two that are in it now. Some men are in barns, others in tents, others, including myself, are, or rather were, sleeping under the blue. The fact is, a thunder-storm one night put an end to that little game, and now everybody has been provided with some roof of canvas, thatch, or tile. I am a victim of over-crowding, being in the loft of a farm house, badly ventilated, in company with four other officers. However, so long as we are out of reach of shells nothing else matters—but it is a pity that we cannot run to sheets to sleep in.

I am getting any amount of exercise riding into the town I mentioned before every day, purchasing for the canteen, or rather trying to do so, because we are very short of things at present, and no cigarettes for the men are obtainable. With this and other duties my time is fully taken up, and the days are not

long enough—or I would not be writing this after midnight.

The work is increased just now owing to the fact that the other chaplain in our Brigade has been evacuated to hospital with para-typhoid, and I have double duty on Sundays. Next Sunday the Brigadier wants a Brigade Church Parade, which will be the biggest thing I have taken. The Divisional Band is going to play, and the whole thing will have much pomp and circumstance about it. It will be a bit of a test talking to 4000 men and the Brigadier and his staff in the open air, but it relieves me of a rushing day tearing round to all the units (seven) taking them separately.

Owing to our proximity to the Headquarters of the Army Chaplains' Department, which are in the aforementioned town, I have done a stroke of business. I called there this morning —and incidently saw Padre ——, who is on the staff—and asked for the D.C.G. (Deputy Chaplain-General) to confirm my men on Monday. I have heard by wire to-night that he will come over here on Monday evening to do so. I am most thankful, and it has been arranged just in time.

B.E.F., FRANCE, *22nd July* 1917.

We have left our village and everything far behind, alas and alack. I had a great Brigade Service there—the biggest service I have ever been at, much less taken. The men and everybody were delighted with the service. To-day I

have had a Celebration of Communion with about 80 communicants of my Battalion—isn't it wonderful? For the next few days I am going to arrange Communion services which will, I expect, be almost as well attended—though I must say I was surprised with the huge number this morning.

At the Confirmation last Monday 25 of my men were confirmed—about half the number who would have been confirmed had it been possible to hold it earlier, as many of the candidates had left the Battalion through various causes in the meantime.

Here the home letters end. They are printed without revision except omitting family messages and news, and they show how he strove to relieve the anxiety of his family.

On the 2nd August 1917 came a sympathetic letter from the Chaplain-General (Bishop Taylor Smith), saying that he had been killed in Action on 31st July. Such letters have been received by many hundreds of families who have suffered the loss of their loved ones.

The 31st July was the day on which what is known as the third battle of Ypres began, when the British, under Sir Douglas Haig, gained ground from the Germans on a considerable front and to some depth to the east of Ypres.

It seems evident from some of the later letters that for some time he had known this advance was impending, and that was why he could not speak definitely as to his leave, then overdue; and no doubt he felt that he could not leave his men until after that had taken place.

The attack commenced at 3.50 A.M. on the morning of the 31st July, and as soon after as practicable, he with his orderly followed his men 'over the top' to minister to the wounded, and carrying a pack on his back with cigarettes and comforts for the soldiers. Within ten yards of the place they were making for, dodging the shells all the time, they came upon some men of another regiment who were badly wounded, and these he stopped to bandage. Whilst so engaged, a shell came and killed him instantaneously, and also the wounded man and others, and seriously injured his orderly. He was laid to rest in the Military Cemetery at Vlamertinghe, west of Ypres, on the 2nd August, by the Senior Chaplain, in the presence of such of the other chaplains as he could get together. The regiment had been and still was heavily engaged, and consequently neither officers nor men were able to attend the funeral.

Many sympathetic letters have been received from officers and men bearing high testimony to his courage and devotion as a chaplain, and

regretting his loss. A private, whilst in hospital at Ilkley, wrote as follows:—

'It came as a terrible blow to me and my chums of the 7th and 9th King's, to hear of Mr Geare's untimely death. If we were in need of help at any time Mr Geare was the one to see us through. At one time we had no canteen to keep us supplied with 'fags' while in the line; but Mr Geare soon altered that, and made us happy. If any concerts were to be organised, leave that to Mr Geare, and everything would be O.K. In fact, if anything was needed to lighten our burdens and make us happy, Mr Geare was the one to put things right for us. So you can imagine how much we feel his loss, the loss of more than a friend, as he proved himself in his Christian charity and willingness to succour those in need of it. Mr Geare has, certainly, by his heroic death and noble work at all times, shown his critics that clergymen do not, and never did, shirk their duty as patriots, by hiding under the protection of the Church.'

His vicar at Ilkley (Mr Glennie) had always looked forward to his returning to his parish, and was much grieved on hearing of his death.

In conclusion is appended the following

Memorial Notice, prepared by Mr Glennie and circulated in his parish.

To the Memory of

WILLIAM DUNCAN GEARE,

MASTER OF ARTS,
CHAPLAIN TO THE FORCES,
A GALLANT GENTLEMAN
AND A FAITHFUL PRIEST,
FRIEND OF LITTLE CHILDREN
AND LOVER OF BRAVE MEN,
THE DUTIFUL SERVANT OF HIS COUNTRY
AND HIS CHURCH,
WHO YIELDED UP HIS SOUL UNTO GOD
WHILE MINISTERING TO THE WOUNDED
ON THE BATTLEFIELD,
TUESDAY, JULY 31, 1917,
THIS TRIBUTE IS OFFERED
BY HIS VICAR AND MANY OTHERS
WHO WORKED AND WORSHIPPED WITH HIM
IN THE CHURCH OF
ST MARGARET'S, ILKLEY.

'*Faithful unto death . . . the crown of life.*'

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